



Children Turn to the President and the First Lady for Help

During the Great Depression, many children wrote to the president and the first lady for support and guidance.

Eleanor Roosevelt had spoken often of her concern for the country's children.

"I have moments of real terror when I think we might be losing this generation. We have got to bring these young people into the active life of the community and make them feel that they are necessary."

--New York Times, 5/34

During her first year in the White House, Mrs. Roosevelt received 300,000 pieces of mail from adults and children. She continued to receive hundreds of thousands of letters in the years that followed.

The First Lady had a secretary who was in charge of the mail. Her secretary would read the mail and either reply to it or send it to another department for action. She would also select about 50 letters a day for Mrs. Roosevelt to read. The First Lady would sometime dictate replies to those letters.

A number of their letters follow.

- In 1935, a [ten-year-old Ohio girl](#) wrote to President Franklin D. Roosevelt to ask for his assistance.
- [A fifteen year old girl](#) wrote to Mrs. Roosevelt for help.
- [A fourteen year old girl](#) wrote for money to buy clothes.
- [A eighteen year old girl](#) asks Mrs. Roosevelt for clothing stored in the White House attic.
- [A twelve year old girl](#) asks the President and Mrs. Roosevelt for \$8.00 for a winter coat.
- [A thirteen year old girl](#) asks for a dress and a pair of shoes.
- [A sixteen year old girl](#) asks for clothes for her family.
- [An eleven year old girl](#) asks for cloth.
- [A seventeen year old](#) asks for a winter coat.
- [Another seventeen year old](#) asks for one of Mrs. Roosevelt's dresses
- [A child in Kansas](#) asks for help to send his brother to the hospital
- [A child in Georgia](#) asks for a loan of \$100
- [A nine year old boy](#) asks for help for her family
- [A seventeen year old boy](#) asks for a loan of \$35.00
- [A thirteen year old girl](#) asks for a coat to wear to school.
- [Another thirteen year old girl](#) asks for used dresses.
- [A thirteen year old girl](#) sent a Sears and Roebuck order for clothes to Mrs. Roosevelt
- [A seventeen girl](#) in Chicago asks for clothes
- [A young girl](#) asks for money for college
- [Another young girl](#) asks for a loan to attend college